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CAN WE BE FRIENDS?
RYAN & SCARLETT

{page 14}



HALIFAX metro®
Monday, December 20, 2010
www.metronews.ca
News worth sharing.

Aqua Nova. Water Show



▶ The Halifax Aqua Nova 16-and-over synchronized swimming team rehearses prior to showcasing its skills at the Winter Water Show at the Centennial Pool yesterday.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO

Swimmers look to make a splash

Synchronized swimming will be one of more than 20 sports featured at the upcoming Canada Winter Games in Halifax. The competition takes place at the Canada Games Centre in Clayton Park during the second week of the games.

Training urged for security

Patient injured after incident with hospital guards {page 4}

RSVP a thing of the past?

Common courtesy of a reply fading away {page 15}

Cyclone soars in test flights

▶ Helicopter fares well in Shearwater: Spokesman ▶ New choppers will likely cost $5.7B, be 7 years late: Federal auditor general ▶ Final versions due June 2012

Even after three contract delays, the Cyclone helicopters could be worth the wait.

Shearwater will be home to some of the 28 helicopters being built by Sikorsky to replace the '60s-era Sea Kings.

The first one was supposed to arrive last month, but a third delay "due to an issue outside of our control" has put it off again, said Sikorsky spokesman Paul Jackson in an email.

The $5-billion contract originally crafted in 2004 has drawn a lot of fire, including comments from the federal auditor general.

But a Cyclone test aircraft was in Shearwater last winter to conduct tests with HMCS Montreal.

According to an email from the Department of National Defence, it was Sikorsky's aircraft and not one of the helicopters from the contract.

It returned to Sikorsky's Flight Development Centre in West Palm Beach, Fla., after the trials.

"We were very pleased with the aircraft's performance on and around the frigate," said Jackson. "As is typical, we also benefited from a few discoveries as this was the aircraft's first real shake-out in that tough operational environment."

But Jackson wouldn't elaborate on what those discoveries were.

The ship trials were a component of the contract. They tested the Cyclone's compatibility with the ship, its ability to perform manoeuvres from the frigate, and its ability to be serviced on board given different weather conditions and sea states.

Jackson said there were "no significant compatibility issues." ● JENNIFER TAPLIN

"That is the subject of ongoing discussions with the Canadian government. We do not comment on customer discussion per our long-standing policy."
PAUL JACKSON, SIKORSKY SPOKESMAN, WHEN ASKED FOR THE REASONS BEHIND THE LATEST DELAY

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 3

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Sea King fleet will be gradually withdrawn from service as Cyclones are phased in ● Two homes for Sea Kings in Canada: Shearwater and Patricia Bay, B.C.

BELOW: CONTRIBUTED, RIGHT: RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



▶ The Cyclone helicopters have been testing well and should be taking to the skies in the next couple of years.

Sea Kings make way for Cyclones

12 Wing Shearwater is getting all six of the test Cyclone helicopters when they arrive.

Sikorsky will provide six Interim Maritime Helicopters for testing before the final products roll in by June 2012. Cyclones will replace the aging Sea Kings, purchased by the Canadian government close to five decades ago in 1963.

"They will be used strictly to conduct some initial training and test and evaluation," according to an email from the Department of National Defence (DND).

The distribution of Cyclones will be more fluid once the final versions phase in and replace the Sea Kings.

"The distribution of the Cyclone helicopter will be dictated by operational requirement, which is the case with the Sea King," according to DND. Barring any other contract delays, once the first final-version Cyclone arrives in June 2012, the next will come in at one a month.

Originally the first Cyclone was due early 2009, but in 2008 and in 2009 Sikorsky claimed schedule relief for "excusable delays." Then in late November just weeks before the first test Cyclones were expected, Sikorsky gave notice of another delay.

Sikorsky's claims of excusable delays will be examined, said a spokesperson for Public Works and Government Services Canada.

"If rejected, we will apply the most severe penalties possible. When the government signs a contract, the contractor is expected to deliver on time and this case is no different," said a Public Works spokesperson in a email.

It took about a month for Public Works and DND to return inquiries from Metro. ● JENNIFER TAPLIN

Timeline

- After the final version of the Cyclones arrive in 2012, testing and evaluations will need to be done. Then it will take another year to properly train instructors and enough air crew to man the first Maritime Helicopter detachments.
- It is at this point the Sea Kings will start to retire.



▶ A Sea King helicopter.

Shearwater ready for the new choppers

Whenever the Cyclones arrive, 12 Wing Shearwater will be ready. The Maritime Helicopter Training Centre, a state-of-the-art training facility complete with flight simulators, was built for impending arrival of the Cyclones.

Training in preparation for the Cyclones was scheduled to start in 2010.

Three new aircraft hangars and support facilities were built.

A water reservoir, sanitary sewer and storm sewer lines were built to service hangars and to provide ire suppression.

"12 Wing will maintain its high pace of operations with the Sea King until the new Cyclone fleet has achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) status," according to a Shearwater backgrounder. 12 Wing is described on the National Defence website "as the centre of naval aviation in Canada.

It supports the navy with up to nine helicopter air detachments for international and domestic operations.

● JENNIFER TAPLIN

For more news, visit metronews.ca/halifax

1 news

On the web at metronews.ca

Bank of Canada will keep a close eye on this week's release of inflation data for the end of 2010. Video at metronews.ca.

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Stuck. On it



▶ Seven-year-old Mateo Giovannetti hurls himself onto a velcro wall at the second annual Teddy Bear Wonderland children's event at the Halifax Forum multi-purpose room yesterday. All proceeds from the event went to the Halifax Region Children's Aid Foundation.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO

What they really want from Santa

Hospital injury prompts action

'Staff responded to a patient and used excessive force resulting in bruising and skin tears': Health Department report

Injuries to an elderly, bedridden woman who was moved in her bed by hospital security guards in Dartmouth have prompted the Health Department to recommend new training for commissionaires who handle difficult patients.

Documents obtained through freedom of information legislation say the woman was rude and abusive to attendants and nurses looking after her in the early morning of Dec. 30, 2009, at the Dartmouth General Hospital.

A member of staff wrote in her report filed with the Capital Health district the woman "took a real swing at me, missing my chin narrowly." The report also says the woman's language and anger was disturbing other patients.

Two security guards were called and one of the commissionaire's reports says he spoke to the woman and asked her to behave.

"I took hold of her hands and turned her in the bed and covered her over with a blanket," it says.

"No extra force was used and no restraint used."

The Health Department determined the incident constituted physical abuse under Nova Scotia's Protection of Persons in Care Act in a report concluded in January.

Carrie Ricker, legal counsel with Capital Health, said the health agency doesn't agree the incident was a case of physical abuse.

"We didn't take the view that it fell into the definition of abuse in that the actions of (the guards) was consistent with our expectations and our procedures," she said.

However, the case was reported to the Health Department by the woman's family, and documents from the hospital indicate the family members argued too much force was used.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

In her defence

- Ricker said the health authority believes the woman's aggression was due to her illness, but she wouldn't specify what the woman's condition was.
- However, Ricker said training programs are being provided for commissionaires who may have to deal with patients with dementia or a mental health condition.

Current too much for turbine?

The strength of the currents in the Bay of Fundy may have been too much for an experimental tidal-power turbine that quit working shortly after it was deployed over a year ago.

All 12 blades from the unit's core were missing when the 400-tonne turbine was lifted from the floor of the Minas Basin about a kilometre off Parrsboro around noon on Thursday.

However, officials from Nova Scotia Power Inc. and Ireland's OpenHydro, who have partnered for the demonstration project, said they've already learned a lot from their cursory look at the recovered unit.

"The blades have failed and we need to understand why," said James Ives, OpenHydro's chief executive officer.

"But the rest of the turbine, all the generator sections all look to be in very good condition."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tidal current

- Ives said it's early in their analysis but they think they overloaded the one-megawatt capacity turbine by underestimating the strength of the tidal current running through it in the Minas Basin.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water rates to rise 27%

Nova Scotia's Utility and Review Board has rejected Halifax Regional Water Commission's request to hike water rates by approximately 40 per cent.

But starting Jan. 1, residential customers will still be paying 27 per cent more at their taps. Industrial and commercial users will see a slightly smaller increase of 19 per cent.

The water commission said an increase was necessary to upgrade the city's aging sewer infrastructure.

Board members were not happy with the utility's handling of its application, however — taking issue what they call "poor quality of evidence" provided by HRWC.

The UARB warned in its report released Friday a future application with "similar deficiencies" will be rejected outright.

METRO

Canada Games Oval opens

After a nasty warm weather delay, the Canada Games Oval will open to the public today with a bang.

The opening ceremonies for the long-track speed skating venue on the Halifax Common will start at 5 p.m. with the first public skate starting at 6 p.m. It's dependent on the weather, but Canada Games spokeswoman Andrea Young said the forecast should work in their favour.

"The ice surface is looking good for (today's) opening event," she said.

Young said the ice surface is skatable if the temperature stays below 10 C.

Local speed skaters will take to the ice to show off what they can do during the ceremony.

"We're really excited to get the public on the ice," Young said.

And there's been a lot of activity on social media sites regarding today's opening of the Canada Games Oval.

"It seems like there's a lot of excitement around," Young said.

JENNIFER TAPLIN

Contact info

Everyone is encouraged to wear a helmet and it is required for children 12 and under. Visit skatehrm.ca or call 490-2347 for event updates.

N.S. among provinces urging CPP expansion

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is expected to face resistance over pension reform when he meets with his provincial and territorial counterparts today, with a group of provinces calling on Ottawa to reverse course and expand the Canada Pension Plan.

Flaherty said last week he won't be proposing any expansion to the CPP at the meetings in Kananaskis, Alta., because not all provinces are on board.

Instead, he'll be pushing a new private-sector plan allowing small firms, employees and even the self-employed to pool resources on new, low-cost pensions.

But the finance ministers of B.C., P.E.I., Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Ontario issued a joint statement yesterday asking Flaherty to keep CPP expansion on the table alongside the private-sector changes he's proposing.

"The federal government needs to take a leadership role here, and they just walked away from it," Ontario's finance minister, Dwight Duncan, said.

"The kinds of pension innovation ideas that we're talking about (such as the proposed private-sector plans) are an important part of the solution, but only one part. One of the most important parts is a modest increase in the Canada Pension Plan."

The provinces said they support the private-sector proposal, but said that shouldn't preclude Ottawa from also improving the CPP. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS



▶ Glen Race is escorted into Dartmouth provincial court on Friday.

Race in court after psychiatric assessments

- Latest adjournment in double murder case
- Glen Race diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia

A mentally ill Dartmouth man accused in a double murder in Nova Scotia made a brief court appearance Friday following two months of psychiatric assessments.

It took two minutes for the judge and lawyers to agree to adjourn Glen Race's case to April 21.

Race, convicted in 2009 of fatally shooting an Upstate New York man, was extradited from the United States in October to face first-degree murder charges in the deaths of Michael Knott and Trevor Brewster.

Knott's body was found on a wooded path in southwestern Nova Scotia on May 5, 2007, and Brewster's body was found four days later under a boardwalk at a lake in Halifax.

The deaths made national headlines because they prompted a rare warning from police that people should use caution in areas where gay men cruise for sex.

On Friday, he appeared somewhat detached when he entered the courtroom, his arms hanging loosely at his sides.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Psychiatric report

Defence lawyer Joel Pink confirmed the court received a 37-page forensic psychiatric report Friday, but he declined to discuss its contents.

▶ He told the court he needs time to examine the evidence compiled by the Crown.

NOVA SCOTIA RCMP

Windsor man faces murder charges

Nova Scotia RCMP say a man is facing three counts of first-degree murder — one of them stemming from the disappearance of a man 10 years ago.

The Mounties say 36-year-old Michael John Lawrence of Windsor is accused of killing Charles Robert Maddison of Portapique.

Maddison, who was 55 when he went missing, was last spoken to by a friend on Sept. 8, 2000, and his burned-out truck was found two days later.

RCMP say Lawrence, who was arrested last week at the federal prison in Springhill, is also charged with the first-degree murders of Nancy Christensen and Barry Kirk Mersereau. The two were found dead in their home in Centre Burlington on Sept. 10, 2000.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

For more local news visit: metronews.ca/local

Child porn found in search: Cops

A man faces a number of charges, including possessing child pornography and sexual assault, after police searched a Dartmouth home. Officers executed a search warrant early Friday on Trinity Avenue and seized computer equipment. Police allege that some of the pornographic images they found are of children who are known to the 45-year-old suspect. They also say one of those children was allegedly touched in a sexual manner by the suspect.

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Discrimination behind wage gap for immigrants

Although there is no single obvious explanation for lower pay, race issue can't be ignored: Social scientist

As analysts dissect the data to figure out why it is that newcomers to Canada these days are having a much harder time than previous generations of immigrants, they're bumping up against an uncomfortable answer.

Discrimination, they say reluctantly, can't be completely ruled out.

For 30 years, the landing for newcomers to Canada has become steadily rougher.

In the 1980s, the source countries for many of Canada's immigrants were in flux, shifting away from traditional English-speaking or European countries, and more towards Asia, says social scientist Arthur Sweetman at McMaster University in Hamilton.

Language and cultural barriers were, and continue to be, a setback for immigrants hoping to close the earnings gap with Canadian-born workers, he says.

In the 1990s, immigrants were hit extra hard by the recession.

The widening gap of the early 2000s can be explained mainly by the dot-com bust. Canada had imported large quantities of technology workers during the boom, who were left high and dry when the market suddenly turned, according to Statistics Canada's Garnett Picot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Eroded earnings

- Part of the answer is that Canadian employers are often suspicious of foreign credentials and experience. So immigrants who, on paper, look equivalent to Canadians in education and background, aren't valued as highly, says Mikal Skuterud at the University of Waterloo.
- And part of the answer is that immigrants don't have the networks and links to good jobs that Canadian-born workers have established, Skuterud said.

Belarus. Election



▶ Protesters rally in Minsk yesterday as they denounce Belarus presidential election results, saying it was falsified.

SERGEI GRITS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leader accused of election fraud

Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus's authoritarian leader, a frequent antagonist of both Russia and the West, sought a fourth term in yesterday's elections, and his opponents claim he's prepared to commit fraud to get it.

3 North and Central America should be able to view the entire show, expected to last three hours if skies are clear. Total eclipse begins at 3:41 a.m.

Moon show tonight

Weather permitting, sky gazers in North and Central America and a tiny sliver of South America will boast the best seats to this year's only total eclipse of the moon just days before Christmas.

The eclipse will occur tonight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexican pipeline blast kills 28, injures 52

A massive oil pipeline explosion lay waste to parts of a central Mexican city yesterday, incinerating people, cars, houses and trees as gushing crude turned streets into flaming rivers.

At least 28 people were killed, 13 of them children, in a disaster authorities blamed on oil thieves.

The blast in San Martin Texmelucan, initally estimated to have affected 5,000 residents in a five-kilometre radius, scorched homes and cars and left metal and pavement twisted and in some cases burned to ash in the intense heat.

The explosion, was apparently caused by thieves trying to steal crude oil, said Valentin Meneses, interior secretary for the state of Puebla. Investigators found a hole in the pipeline and equipment for extracting crude, said Laura Gurza federal Civil Protection emergency response agency chief, adding the thieves lost control due to the fuel's high exit pressure.

RODOLFO PEREZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



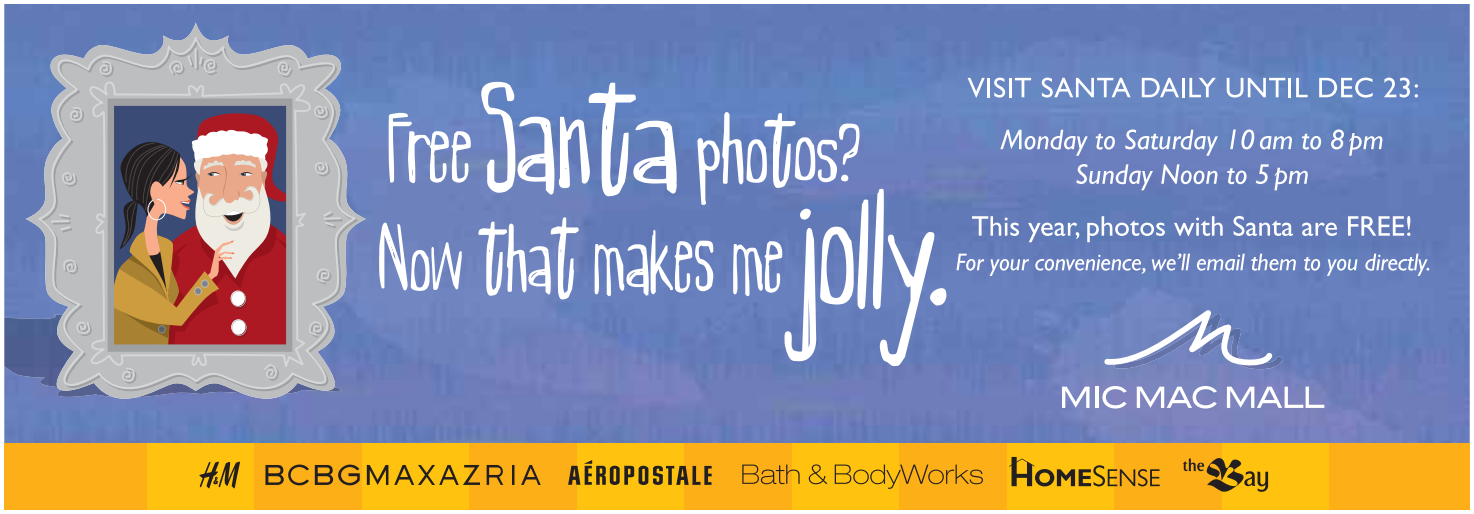
▶ A firefighter carries a puppy after an oil pipeline explosion in the town of San Martin Texmelucan, Mexico, yesterday.

The oil flowed more than a kilometre down a street before diverting into a river. At some point a spark of unknown origin caused both to erupt in flames.

Aside from the deaths, at least 52 people were hurt and 84 remained in a shelter late yesterday. More than 115 homes were scorched, 32 of them destroyed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fuel theft

- Fuel theft is rampant in the Pemex network and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of fuel have been stolen in recent years, the company has said.
- President Felipe Calderon has ordered an investigation to determine who was responsible and apply the full weight of the law, the president's office stated, pointing to the early indications of an illegal tap.



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Sailor, 15, logs longest leg of solo world journey

'I don't think I can live in a house at the moment,' Laura Dekker says

A 15-year-old Dutch sailor yesterday completed the longest leg so far of her attempted circumnavigation of the globe, saying it felt "really weird" to be back on dry land after nearly three weeks out in the ocean.

Laura Dekker, aiming to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world, was in good spirits after completing the 2,200 nautical-mile (2,532 land-mile, 4,074-kilometre) trip from the Cape Verde Islands off West Africa.

Dekker docked her 11.5-metre, twin-masted sailboat Guppy in Simpson Bay Lagoon after what she called "a very nice trip" so far.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For the record

- If Laura Dekker completes the voyage, any record she claims would be unofficial and likely to be challenged. The Guinness World Records and the World Sailing Speed Record Council have decided they will no longer recognize records for "youngest" sailors to avoid encouraging dangerous attempts.
- Dekker's venture stirred an intense debate about whether young people should be allowed to sail the world's oceans alone. A Dutch court originally blocked the voyage and only permitted her to set off after she took measures to manage the risks.

JUDY FITZPATRICK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶Fifteen-year-old Laura Dekker stands in the dock upon her arrival to Simpson Bay Lagoon in the Caribbean island of St. Maarten, yesterday. The Dutch sailor, aiming to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world, completed the longest leg, a 2,200 nautical-mile trip, from Cape Verde Islands off West Africa on her 11.5-metre, twin-masted sailboat Guppy.

Korean tensions prompt UN security meeting

The UN Security Council met in emergency session yesterday amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula and a North Korean warning of a "catastrophe" if South Korea goes ahead with a live-fire drill.

Russia called for the meeting, and Moscow wants the UN's most powerful body to adopt a statement calling on North Korea and South Korea "to exercise maximum restraint."

The North has warned of "catastrophe" if the South goes ahead with plans to conduct one-day, live-fire drills by Tuesday on the same front-line island the North shelled last month as the South conducted a similar exercise.

A draft presidential statement circulated by Russia to council members and obtained by The Associated Press also stresses the need for efforts "to ensure a de-escalation of tension" between the two Koreas and a "resumption of dialogue and resolution of all problems dividing them exclusively through peaceful diplomatic means."

It asks Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to immediately send an envoy to both countries "to consult on urgent measures to settle peacefully the current crisis situation." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUIS LANZANO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ North Korea's UN ambassador Sin Son-ho declines to answer questions at the United Nations, yesterday.

Chinese scuffle

- South Korean officials questioned three Chinese fishermen rescued from a boat that capsized during a maritime scuffle with the coast guard in which one fisherman died and another was missing, an official said yesterday.



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Santa. Swim



▶ People dressed as Santa Claus come out of the sea following a swim, in Monaco, yesterday. The sea temperature was 15 C.

LIONEL CIRONNEAU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A mad dash to shore

While Monaco enjoyed clear skies, most of northern and central Europe were suffering from freezing temperatures and snow, which caused numerous air and rail cancellations.

A new race of hybrids?

Evidence of hybridization includes a grizzly and polar bear mating

Climate change and the loss of Arctic sea ice could trigger interbreeding in 22 species, perhaps resulting in the creation of a new species or the extinction of endangered species, according to a biologist at the U.S. National Marine Mammal Laboratory in Juneau, Alaska.

In a commentary in the most recent edition of Nature, Brendan Kelly and two other U.S. researchers are asking the scientific community to begin monitoring the wildlife population in the Arctic for examples of this interbreeding or hybridization.

Kelly also hopes that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature will develop a policy to deal with managing hybrids. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

"By warming the climate, we are creating an opportunity for interbreeding for many species and populations."
RESEARCHER BRENDAN KELLY

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Hackers of the world unite in 2011

Facebook is likely holding a skills competition to seek out new talent says Alan Middleton of York University

Hacking, the reclusive sport of individuals with socially crippling intelligence is being pulled from the depths of the suburban basement and thrust onto the podium.

Well, there might not be a podium, but there is talk of a cup.

Facebook has created a page containing details about a Hacker Cup in 2011. People can apply and compete online and a final 25 will be flown to compete in the algorithmic programming contest in California in the new year for $5,000 US and the title. The tests are designed by Facebook engineers.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Hacking culture

Registration for the Hacking Cup opens today.

Rounding up hackers
Facebook spokesperson said, "Hacking is a central part of Facebook's culture. We want to bring engineers from around the world together to compete in a multi-round programming competition."

In the spotlight
Hackers supporting WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange have crashed corporate websites, including MasterCard, in retribution for Assange's arrest.

Stuffed. Germs



▶ Drew Oliver, owner of Giant Microbes, displays a few of his creations in his Stamford, Conn., offices. The one-time Harvard Lampoon editor turned a sense of humour into a growing business for stuffed toy germs.

CRAIG RUTTLE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A germ-based business

Once found mostly in pediatricians' offices and the labs of off-kilter university professors, Drew Oliver's cuddly stuffed germs have spawned a Facebook fan club and subculture of eager collectors.

Widow gives back to Madoff's victims

JEFFREY LANGLOIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ Barbara and Jeffry Picower

Many of Bernard Madoff's victims who thought they lost everything could get at least half their money back after the widow of a Florida philanthropist agreed Friday to return a staggering $7.2 billion US that her husband reaped from the giant Ponzi scheme.

Federal prosecutors reached the settlement with the estate of Jeffry Picower, a businessman who drowned after suffering a heart attack in the swimming pool of his Palm Beach, Fla., mansion in October 2009. Picower was the single biggest beneficiary of Madoff's fraud.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"We will return every penny received from almost 35 years of investing with Bernard Madoff."
BARBARA PICOWER

Market moment

Dollar	Natural gas 1,000 cu ft	Oil	TSX
– 0.67¢ (98.74¢ US)	$4.066 (+ 1.8¢) Gold contracts $1,379.20 (+ $8.20)	+ 32¢ US ($88.02 US)	20.23 (13,201.46)

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7 Down With Webster - Whoa Is Me
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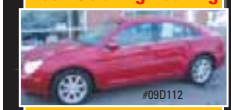
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Urban Compass

STEPHEN KIMBER



Last Tuesday, 300 employees at the Convergys call centre in Cornwallis received the bad news.

Their employer — in the euphemistic-speak favoured by companies delivering bad news everywhere — had decided to "transition" their jobs elsewhere "to better serve its clients by increasing efficiencies and reducing costs."

They had been fired.

The reason: A six-year government payroll rebate program that initially lured the company to set up shop in Cornwallis had run out. Convergys, whose Nova Scotia call centres have generated $15 million in taxpayer-provided rebates for the company, also closed its Truro-Millbrook centre earlier this year when its rebate deal there expired.

Convergys is not alone. Another call centre, run by TeleTech and lured to Nova Scotia with $11.8 million under the same much-touted government scheme in 2005, shut down in Amherst earlier this month, turfing 215 more workers onto the street.

Despite that, Contact Centre Nova Scotia, an industry-promoting association, insists its industry isn't "drying up and blowing away" and "remains viable for Nova Scotia."

Really?

Consider: On the day before Cornwallis workers received their Convergys Christmas present, the company's Philippines' unit bragged it had reached its year's target: 13 call centres and 23,000 employees.

"The Philippines, in fact, is now 'the call centre capital of the world ...'"

This weekend, Convergys added to those numbers during a three-day job fair at Shakey's Restaurant in Tacloban City. "Transitioning," anyone?

The Philippines, in fact, is now "the call centre capital of the world," having displaced India as the non-union, cheap-labour country of choice for runaway call centre companies.

Runaway? Though Convergys is a Cincinnati-based transnational, its tentacles reach to wherever there's a government willing to do a deal.

On Friday, Convergys announced — "just in time for the holidays" — it is "seeking candidates for 60 full- and part-time positions" at its call centre in Logan, Utah.

More Cornwallis jobs?

More sweet subsidies?

During the last 20 years, provincial governments have pitched Nova Scotia as — in the words of former premier Rodney MacDonald — "one of the most business-friendly places in the world."

What that generally meant was — in the interests of new job announcement photo-ops — our governments were willing to pay companies they knew wouldn't stay to create jobs they knew wouldn't last.

That's no way to run a province.

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER



Device targets drunks

Worth mentioning

Intoximeter

TROY FLEECE/THE CANADIAN PRESS



There's a long, steady beeping sound as a Mountie encourages a young woman to breathe into a plastic mouthpiece connected to the next generation in breath testing technology.

The young woman and half a dozen other people in the room who have been drinking are not in trouble. They are helping nearly 20 officers at the RCMP training academy in Regina learn how to use the new Intoximeter.

The device uses infrared and fuel-cell technologies. It's an upgrade from the old device, which just uses infrared to give readings. The new Intoximeter will be used when suspected drunk drivers are taken back to the police station or detachment, not at the side of the road.

It will catch the experienced drinkers who are otherwise good at masking symptoms of being drunk, said RCMP Cpl. Michael Benjamin, a veteran traffic services officer from Weyburn, Sask.

"You see a lot of guys that have developed such a tolerance that they're not slurring their speech," he said. "Their eyes aren't glazed. They're not showing the typical signs of somebody who'd be in the upper 100s, the lower 200s for readings, and they're talking and acting as normal."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

What's more fun – Christmas or New Year's Eve?

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Metro Minute at skating oval

The wait is over for Haligonians looking to carve their skates into the ice of the Canada Games oval on the Halifax Common.

The grand opening was set for last week, but had to be postponed due to poor ice surface conditions.

But more winter-like weather the past few days has made everything better, with the opening going ahead today beginning at 5 p.m.

Everyone is welcome and can bring their skates to take some laps around the surface.

The oval will be home to long-track speedskating events at the Games in February.

METRO

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



▶ The grand opening of the Canada Games oval on the Halifax Common is scheduled for today at 5 p.m.

2 scene

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES



▶ Actresses Cloris Leachman and Martha Plimpton speak onstage during the Raising Hope panel for the Fox portion of the summer Television Critics Association press tour in August.

It's nice being a grandmother at 40

Actress Martha Plimpton has no problem playing a granny in the Fox comedy Raising Hope

TIFFANY ROSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

METRO WORLD NEWS IN HOLLYWOOD

American actress Martha Plimpton who is best known for playing quirky roles in indie movies, shot to fame in the teen classic The Goonies in 1985.

Born into a performing family — her father is Keith Carradine and her mother is Shelley Plimpton — Martha has starred in I Shot Andy Warhol, Running on Empty and Beautiful Girls. She currently plays Virginia Chance on the new Fox comedy Raising Hope, about an uneducated working class family attempting to raise a baby.

Metro caught up with the 40-year-old star in a Beverly Hills hotel.

After being a big indie actress, was it a big decision for you to chose to do a television comedy series?

It was a big decision only in the sense that it involved leaving my home city of New York for a while and having a steady gig, which is great by the way.

But as far as the decision to do it, it wasn't a tough one at all. I read the pilot and I thought it was hilarious. I loved Virginia.

What's it like playing a grandmother at the age of 40?

At first of course I was a little bit nervous because I thought, "Well, shouldn't I play a mother first?" I don't even know if I'm ready for that yet! (Laughs). And you can't forget that Hollywood does tend to age people rather rapidly so I was naturally concerned about that as any actress would be.

But that is the joke. The idea that these people have no idea what they were doing when they had their own child and that child is a father and we've got to learn how to be adequate, responsible grandparents all over again.

So in that sense I don't feel like I'm playing a grandmother — like I'm not wearing a gray wig or walking hunched over or anything like that.

What's it like having the legendary Cloris Leachman playing your grandmother?

She is an unbelievable actress and woman. So much fun.

This is a woman who ate actual shaving cream. If there is a joke to be had, nothing will stop her!

We had a scene where she is asleep and we are grooming her in the middle of the night as it's the only time she will let us. I'm shaving her legs and then she sort of pops up awake and we all hide underneath the bed.

This is entirely improvised by Cloris — she took some of this actual shaving cream, it was not whipped cream and just ate it! And she did it like for three takes.

News in brief



One of the stars of MTV's Jersey Shore has been indicted for an assault that prosecutors say happened just off camera during the first season.

A grand jury in Ocean County, N.J., says there's evidence that Ronald "Ronnie" Ortiz-Magro committed a crime.

The grand jury said the 25-year-old reality TV star knocked a man out with a punch on Sept. 4, 2009, when the show was being filmed in Seaside Heights. While the punch wasn't shown on the show, Ortiz-Magro was seen bragging about it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





DISNEY INTERACTIVE GAMES



▶ A screenshot from the video game Tron: Evolution.

Updating Tron the West Coast way

New movie and video game created in Vancouver

There's more than a little Vancouver in the futuristic worlds of the film Tron: Legacy and accompanying video game Tron: Evolution.

Both Disney projects were created there, a happy coincidence for Propaganda Games' Darren Hedges.

"From Day 1, we had access to the sets, access to the scripts, access to the talent, the directors, the producers," Hedges said in a recent interview. "We went on set, we saw them film day after day, night after night in most cases."

For game director Hedges, it was a peek into everything from how the costumes were put together to how filmmakers framed their shots.

"And that allowed us to create a very cohesive experience that spans from the video game into the movie," he said.

The original 1982 film Tron tells the story of a computer hacker who ends up being swallowed by a digital world. In the sequel, the hacker's son is transported into the Grid, the world existing inside the computer.

The new video game is a prequel to Tron: Legacy with the gamer playing a program called Anon. Hedges' team decided early on they didn't want to tell the same story.

"Luckily for us, the filmmakers were very much of a like mind," said Hedges.

The goal was a "transmedia experience."

"What we mean by this is everything feeds into the franchise, nothing really replicates itself," explained Hedges. The end of the game leads directly to the opening of the movie — albeit separated by 200 Tron years — offering insight into the genesis of characters and why certain events unfolded the way they did.

The game, rated T for Teen for PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, PSP, Nintendo Wii and DS, includes the voices of Olivia Wilde (Quorra) and Bruce Boxleitner (Tron) and music of Daft Punk from the movie.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Late night rivals take time to show Christmas spirit

HENNY RAY ABRAMS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ Jimmy Fallon

Late-night rivals Jimmy Fallon and Craig Ferguson are filled with the Christmas spirit. They even sent each other gifts.

At the end of the monologue on NBC's Late Night With Jimmy Fallon, the New York-based host showed viewers a photo of the present he had sent to Ferguson — a "beautiful, top-notch Christmas sweater" (in Fallon's words) accented with both his face and Ferguson's against a Christmas ornament.

"He's over at CBS in L.A., and I know how cold it gets at night there," Fallon explained.

What had Ferguson given in return? Under his desk, Fallon found a large gift box containing two kittens named Regis and Kelly.

At almost the same moment on CBS' Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson, its host was eagerly unwrapping the box that contained the sweater from Fallon.

"Oh, I know you're like, 'Craig, you're crazy, he's your direct competitor, you can't say how great Jimmy is,'" cracked Ferguson. "But everybody knows it: Jimmy is awesome. ... Everybody knows Jimmy Fallon is the best knitter in show business."

Before launching into another of his one-man dialogues, Ferguson alerted viewers to the gift he had sent to Fallon.

"He should get it tonight. 'You mean on his show, which is in direct competition with yours, Craig?' Yes. 'Craig, you're confusing us, what should we do?' I don't know. I'm not your parents!"

The transcontinental, cross-network gift swap was the latest comic stunt bonding these rivals in the 12:35 a.m. (Eastern) hour.

In the past, they engaged in a food fight with spaghetti and waved at each other with giant novelty Mickey Mouse hands.

"I can't think of someone I'd rather be against this time of night," said Ferguson on Thursday with a naughty look. "I love being against you after midnight, Jimmy!"

So there's peace and goodwill among these men.

But Ferguson added, "For all those media hacks that like to poke the hornet's nest and say there's a late-night war — go right ahead!"

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Mocha Yule Log

PREP TIME: 20 MIN. ➤ TOTAL TIME: 198 MIN ➤ MAKES: 24 SERVINGS

What You Need

6 eggs, separated, divided

1/2 cup sugar, divided

1 pkg. (6 squares) *Baker's* Bittersweet Chocolate, melted, cooled

125 g (1/2 of 250-g pkg.) *Philadelphia* Brick Cream Cheese, softened

1 tub (1 L) *Cool Whip* Whipped Topping, thawed, divided

2 Tbsp. *Maxwell House* Instant Coffee Original Roast

3 Tbsp. warm water

1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder

Make it

HEAT oven to 350°F.

LINE 17-1/2 x11-1/2x3/4-inch pan with parchment paper; spray with cooking spray. Beat egg whites in small bowl with mixer on high speed until frothy. Gradually add 2 Tbsp. sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

BEAT egg yolks and 1/4 cup of the remaining sugar in large bowl with mixer until thick and lemon coloured. Add melted chocolate; beat just until blended. Gently stir in 1/4 of the egg whites; stir in remaining egg whites until well blended. Spread onto bottom of prepared pan.

BAKE 15 min. or until top of cake springs back when touched with finger. Cover with dampened clean tea towel; cool cake in pan 1 hour. Meanwhile, dissolve coffee in warm water; cool. Beat cream cheese and remaining sugar in medium bowl until well blended. Gradually beat in coffee. Gently stir in 2 cups Cool Whip.

REMOVE towel from cake. Use parchment paper to lift cake from pan; spread cake with Cool Whip mixture. Starting at one long side, roll up cake, peeling off parchment as cake is rolled. Diagonally cut off one end of cake; reserve. Place cake on platter; place removed piece, diagonally-cut side facing out, next to log. Frost with remaining Cool Whip, leaving exposed ends unfrosted. Sift cocoa powder over cake.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 110, Total fat 7 g, Saturated fat 4.5 g, Cholesterol 45 mg, Sodium 35 mg, Carbohydrate 9 g, Dietary fibre 1 g, Sugars 8 g, Protein 2 g, Vitamin A 4 %DV, Vitamin C 0 %DV, Calcium 2 %DV, Iron 4 %DV.

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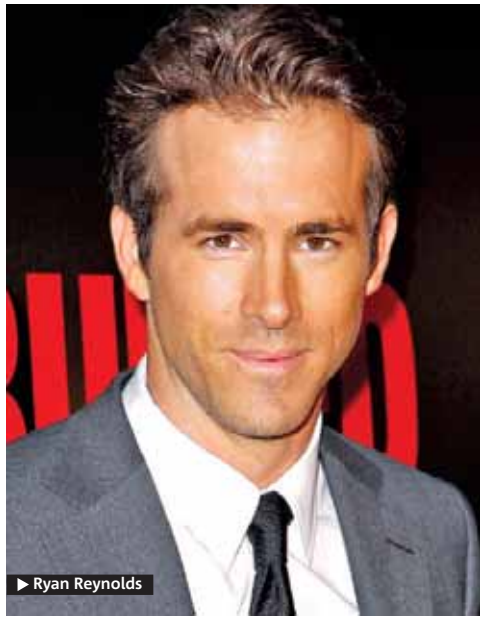
BAD THINGS HAPPEN FOR A REASON



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No drama for Ryan, Scarlett

Hollywood couple recently went public with their decision to split


▶ Ryan Reynolds

They may have announced their separation last week, but Ryan Reynolds and Scarlett Johansson looked mighty amicable during dinner at a New York restaurant this weekend, according to People.

"They just wanted to connect and have a friendly chat," a source says. "The tone was light and fun, despite the untruths that the media is working up. They aren't reconciling. This was just two people who were married being civil and friendly." METRO

Jolie-Pitts spending holidays on the road


▶ Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie

Despite spending most of the autumn on the road, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt won't be coming home for the holidays.

"We're going to travel with the kids and go to a random part of the world," Jolie tells Ryan Seacrest during a radio interview.

"We're going to travel and have an adventure because that's what we love to do."

The biggest challenge for Jolie, whether at home or abroad, is keeping gifts straight for all six of her kids.

"I've got it all boxed and ready to go," she says. "I'm trying to get every stocking right." METRO

Is more trouble brewing for Demi Lovato?

Demi Lovato has been dealing with the fallout of some racy photos of her leaking online late last week, but sources tell X17 that the 18-year-old Disney star may have a lot more to worry about.

The source claims that Lovato's behaviour on her summer tour got so out of hand that a homemade sex tape could be popping up online soon.

The source says Demi was "no stranger to filming her sexual exploits" while out on the road. "No one really cared about what she did or how she acted. It was truly sad to watch."

A representative for Lovato was quick to dispel the rumours, calling them 'completely unfounded'.

Lovato is still in a treatment centre addressing "emotional" issues. METRO

Miller, Law picking up where they left off

The second time around seems to be agreeing with Jude Law and Sienna Miller, as the British actors have reportedly been living together for the past month, according to the Daily Mail.

The pair reportedly went in together on the purchase of a super-private $12 million, seven-bedroom home in north London.

Sources say the pair, who were engaged previously before Law had an affair with his nanny, are discussing marriage once again. METRO

Johnny stealing hearts on the set of 'Pirates'

Although Johnny Depp has been with Vanessa Paradis for 12 years — and has two children with her — that didn't stop him from reportedly getting friendly and flirtatious with a model on the set of the new Pirates of the Caribbean film, according to Star magazine.



Kristen Stephenson-Pino tells the magazine Depp took special interest in her, watching the makeup department make a mold of her breasts, joking about being intimate together and even inviting her back to his trailer.

"It was one-on-one," she says of her time in his trailer.

"I was in there for a few hours, and that's, like, everyone's ideal lover boy. He's just the whole package." METRO

Celebrity tweets



David Arquette
It is being reported that I'm having a Nervous Breakdown. I assure you am not. This stemmed from a joke I made on The Howard Stern Show and like many things in the Media it was mis-reported and sensationalized.



Pamela Anderson [@PamelaDAnderson]
VICTORY! Thanks in large part 2 your efforts, NASA grounds monkey radiation experiments!



Sarah Silverman [@SarahKSilverman]
Your desperate & misguided attempt to look younger is the reason your daughter doesn't look up to you



Conan O'Brien
I may be alone in this, but I believe one day DNA evidence will exonerate the Grinch.



▶ RSVPs, which were once common, seem to be disregarded more often these days.

Is the tradition to RSVP now passé?

The once common courtesy of replying to an invite is becoming a lamented thing of the past

It's become an acronym for a host's frustration: RSVP — Really, Seriously Very Peeved.

From casual get-togethers to catered affairs, the once-common act of replying to invitations has become an often lost and much lamented cause.

"It frustrates me to no end that people disregard or dismiss RSVPs as optional, especially when I have been nice enough to invite them to a party," says Dawn Pearce, 35, a technical support specialist in Raleigh, N.C. "I get so aggravated I don't know why I even bother with invitations at all."

A social code that has endured for generations, RSVP is short for "repondez s'il vous plait" or, "please reply."

Invitees should answer as soon as possible, according to etiquette expert Lizzie Post, a great-great-granddaughter of graciousness guru Emily Post.

"It's not like I'm asking you to write a letter ... All you have to do is hit reply."
RICHARD FIORE, A RETIRED MUSIC EXECUTIVE, ON REPLYING TO RSVPS

Replies, however, can even be hard to get when the event is for business.

In Phoenix, Kim Horn deals with lacking and late RSVPs for meetings of her professional group, though its members should know better – they're wedding planners.

For those who can't stomach angling for RSVPs, some companies will take on the task for fees that can run into hundreds of dollars.

How did we get to this point of no RSVP return?

Some point to technology as a factor. In an era of constant, instant status updates, one person's RSVP may be another's "C U in 5."

"Technology is changing our culture, the way we communicate ... which than means it changes the way we connect and disconnect," said Gerald Goodman, a psychologist and communication expert, and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. The fading of RSVP could, he suggests, signify "a new etiquette of freedom."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 life

Family in brief



A survey by the University of Southern California has found that the per cent of parents who limit Internet access as a punishment has nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

Among parents surveyed, 57 per cent said they withheld web access to punish their kids, up from 32 per cent in 2000.

The number that restricted TV-watching remained the same.

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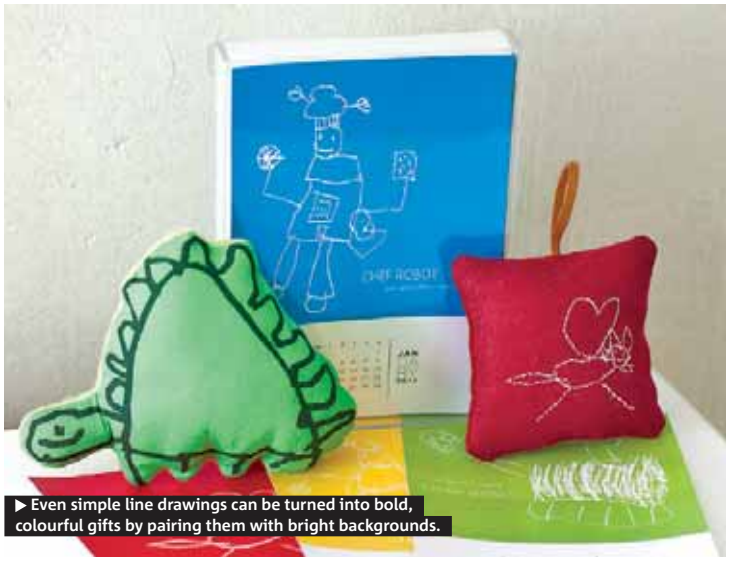
Cash-strapped parents skip stores to swap Barbies and Lego online this Christmas.



Creative environmentalism

Reduce, reuse and recycle children's artwork into collages, notecards or other holiday gifts

HOLLY RAMER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ Even simple line drawings can be turned into bold, colourful gifts by pairing them with bright backgrounds.

Turning children's artwork into Christmas gifts can be a creative way to clear clutter. So take those drawings and paintings off the fridge and tuck them under the tree.

Wrapping gifts with your child's creations is the easiest way to recycle them, but the artwork can also be the gift. Admittedly, such presents may appeal mainly to doting grandparents, but at least Grandma and Grandpa will be taken care of in style. All of these projects start with scanning or taking digital photographs of children's artwork, which allows the images to be manipulated without harming the original. It also means you can make multiple gifts with the same art.

MAGNETS

Use photo editing software to crop the scanned image or photo into a square or rectangle, and reduce the size to a few centimetres across. Print the image on photo paper or card stock, cut it out and then cut a piece of foam core board the same size. Glue the image to the foam core backing and glue a magnet on the back. Voila! A magnet to hold up the next batch of artwork that will begin arriving home when school resumes after the holiday break.

FRAMED COLLAGE

The same technique used for the magnets can be repeated to create a striking framed display of dozens of drawings and paintings — a miniature retrospective of sorts. Again, reduce the size of the scanned images or photos and print as many as you like on photo paper or card stock. Back each cutout image with foam core, and glue them to a large piece of white poster board cut to fit your frame. Twenty images, shrunk down to roughly 7.5 centimetres, will fit nicely in a 40-by-50-centimetre frame. Play around with the arrangement before gluing to ensure roughly equal spacing between the images.

The foam core backing gives the images extra dimension, but a similar effect could be achieved by uploading images to photo printing websites that create collages in a variety of sizes.

NOTECARDS

Have a toddler who's still in a "modern art" phase? Abstract finger paintings can be turned into notecards suitable for anyone who appreciates bold colour. Isolate interesting sections of a larger painting, crop to 14-by-11 centimetres and glue to the front of a card made out of a standard 21-by-28-centimetre piece of card stock cut in half, or print the image directly on the card stock. This idea also works well if you have a large detailed picture coloured by an older child that can be broken up into interesting sections.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Decorations

Here's another idea on how to make the most with what you have.

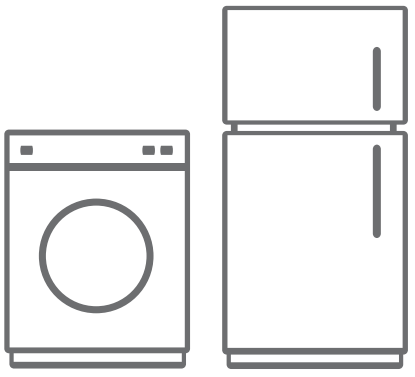
▶ **Ornaments** Melissa Crowe, a fabric artist from Portland, Maine, who usually works with wool felt, has made embroidered Christmas tree ornaments using a child's drawing.

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COMPOSTING MADE EASY FOR CITY LIVING

I would love to compost, but I am not sure how to manage it in an apartment. What are the options? It seems that the city of Montreal is not really as compost-friendly as other Canadian cities. ***Erika of Montreal***

I have one word for you: worms. Just because you don't have yard space doesn't mean you can't join the growing number of Canadians who are composting. Statistics Canada's research from 2006, albeit dated, showed 27 per cent of households nationwide composted. And, Quebec households have steadily been increasing their rates of composting, too.

You need to try vermicomposting! It's ideal for small spaces and can be done indoors, which makes it perfect for apartment dwellers. It means you discard organic matter generated in your kitchen — like banana peels — by feeding it to worms. But not just any worms; you're going to need some red wrigglers.

Vermiculture is a great way to reduce the organic matter otherwise destined for the landfill.

The result is a very fertile mixture of decomposed food scraps and worm poop.

Vermiculture is a great way to reduce the organic matter otherwise destined for the landfill. The process takes three to six months and depending on how much you feed your worms, you'll need to harvest the vermicompost two to four times a year. It's excellent fertilizer for gardens, laws, or potted plants on balconies and even indoor plants.

Fans of worm farms claim they're much easier to care for than a dog or a cat and they don't smell. There are many great online resources to help you source and set up your very own worm bin.

Check out City Farmer's resources listed by province, or Worm Girl Montreal, who sells worm bins and worms at wormgirlmontreal.wordpress.com.

LARRY CROWE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



8 portions
Prep and Cook time: 75 mins

▶ Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart

The holidays are perfect for chocolate

The Chocolate Peppermint Snowflake Tart is easy to make and great to bring to parties Be creative and change up the flavours or cookie shapes

Ganache tarts are elegant, decadent and the epitome of chocolate love.

Best yet, they are easy to make, can be prepared ahead of time and transport well. In other words, they are perfect for the holidays.

This dressed-up version is flavoured with peppermint extract and topped with festive snowflake cookies, but you could just as easily flavour it with orange, almond or vanilla extracts and top it with whatever cookie shapes inspire you. Holly leaves would be pretty and elegant, and snowmen would be fun.

Ingredients :

Crust:
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) cocoa powder
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) sugar
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) unsalted butter (1 1/2 sticks), cut into chunks

Ganache:
- 300 ml (1 1/4 cups) heavy cream
- 250 g (8 oz) semisweet chocolate
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) peppermint extract
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F).
2. In a food processor, combine flour, salt, cocoa powder and sugar. Pulse to combine. Add butter and process until mixture forms a dough, about 30 seconds.
3. Remove dough from processor and break off about a third of it. Set this aside.
4. Press remaining dough into bottom and up sides of a 23-cm (9-inch) tart pan with removable bottom. Use a fork to prick bottom of crust all over. Freeze for 15 minutes, then bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until centre of bottom feels firm.
5. Meanwhile, make snowflake cookies. Roll out reserved dough between 2 sheets of parchment paper to 3 mm (1/8 inch) thick. Move dough to a baking sheet, including parchment paper, then refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes.
6. Use 2.5- to 5-cm (1- to 2-inch) cookie cutters to cut out 8 to 10 snowflakes (of multiple sizes, if desired). If dough becomes too soft, you may need to chill it in the refrigerator as you work. Once all of the cookies are cut, transfer them to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 10 minutes.
7. Bake snowflakes for 10 to 15 minutes (depending on size of the cookies) or until firm. Let cookies cool on baking sheet.
8. Ganache Filling: In a small saucepan over medium, heat cream until simmering. Add chocolate and let sit off heat for 2 minutes. Stir until smooth. Stir in peppermint extract, then pour into baked tart shell. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.
9. When ready to serve, dust snowflake cookies with powdered sugar, then arrange them on the top of the tart.

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MIRACLE ON YONGE STREET

"I was so scared when we arrived in Canada that I told my husband we needed to go back to India."

Two years later life is a lot better for Hyma and her young family thanks to the caring people at Yonge Street Mission in Toronto.

They arrived in Canada with the promise of a job in the computer industry for her husband and that's all. It was a lonely and frustrating time for Hyma.

Her daughter cried all day long missing her grandparents, aunts and cousins. With no money to afford day care, Hyma couldn't work. She pushed her stroller through the streets of the city with her distraught daughter unsure of where to turn for help.

Then one day she walked into the Yonge Street Mission and her life made a turn for the better.

She signed up for a computer class and reluctantly left her daughter at the Mission daycare. As Hyma learned about emails, word documents and PowerPoint presentations her daughter started to play with the other children. She began to smile, sing and dance. "I'm OK, I'm a big girl now!" she proudly told her Mom one day after class.



▶ Thanks to the Yonge Street Mission in Toronto, Hyma and her family will celebrate Christmas in Canada this year.

Although her husband is working, money is tight. By choice, they live frugally and send every extra cent to their family-run orphanage in India that looks after children with AIDS.

They have never celebrated Christmas in Canada.

"Last year we were going to go to a restaurant but we sent money to India instead and fed one hundred people at the orphanage."

Not too long ago the children in the orphanage sent a message to their generous "angels" in Canada.

They told Hyma and her husband that they were praying for them. And those prayers have been answered.

The people at the Yonge Street Mission are looking after Hyma and her family with computer classes, support services and friendship.

She recently went to the Yonge Street Mission's Christmas Market that distributes donated gifts to families in need.

Now for the first time since they arrived in Canada Hyma's daughter will finally know the joy so many children experience Christmas morning: a brand new toy to unwrap and love.

Be your own boss, at a cost

BOOK REVIEW

CRAIG LUND
WORK@METRONEWS.CA



Being an entrepreneur at heart is more than just an aspiration, it's a serious commitment to a very different lifestyle.

According to author and columnist Scott Gerber, there are plenty of reasons why you should burn your resume and start up your own business.

Gerber, who has been described as the Simon Cowell of young entrepreneurship, paints a pretty graphic portrait of the real life start up in his book Never Get a Real Job, and be forewarned, it may have you rethinking your "being your own boss" fantasy.

In the first part of Gerber's book the chapters take the tough-love approach

We "were so busy riding the 'everyone-is-a-winner' bandwagon that you failed to realize you were being rewarded for mediocrity," says Gerber.

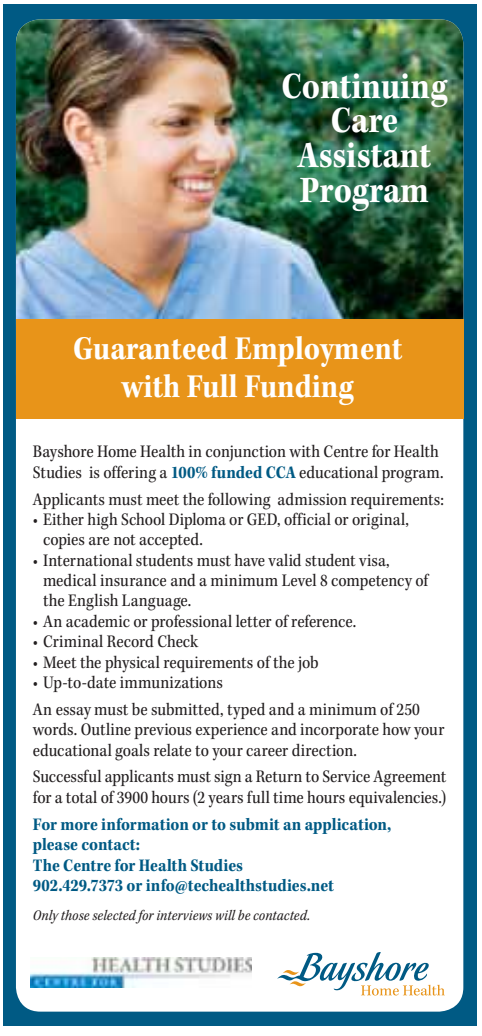
This book is written for Generation Y, and the reality is, many new grads, university- and college-educated to boot, aren't finding work.

I am certainly biased towards Gerber's opinion — fire your boss and take charge of your own fate and income, or if you're just graduating, rather than go back to school start a business.

As he highlights in his book, it is far easier to start a business when you are younger, and have less to lose.

CRAIG LUND IS THE PRESIDENT ELECT OF THE AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATIONS TORONTO CHAPTER AND CAN BE REACHED AT HELLO@CRAIGLUND.CA







Think you made a major mistake?

Academic advisers can help struggling students make the best of an experience they may be unsure of

Exactly a year ago Ramin Asgari was struggling.

A heavy course load, looming exams and a tough transition from high school were overwhelming the civil engineering student as he approached the end of his first semester at the University of British Columbia.

Unable to see himself passing, he considered giving up — until a peer academic support group turned things around.

"They helped a lot," says the 19-year-old. "They assured me that 'Yeah, first year is like that, but it gets a lot better,' and it really does – I've gotten way better grades this year than last year."

The group review sessions Asgari attended also helped dispel the isolation that had fed his academic despair.

"I'm not feeling like I'm the only person on campus," says Asgari, who still goes to tutorials and peer review sessions in his second year.

"I'd say it was more emotional help than actual study help."

The free drop-in sessions are similar to others run at universities across the country.

The peer-run programs in particular provide a starting point for students struggling with the academic demands of university.

Vladimir Nikitin says students often come just to connect with someone else who understands.

"They find out there's a lot of them who have the same problems," says the political science student who runs a peer study session twice a week at Carleton University in Ottawa.

"It's a safe environment where everyone can share and discuss issues that are not necessarily course-related."

The informal nature of the sessions and the fact that they are run by another student also help defuse any intimidation felt by someone who may have never reached out for help before, says Nikitin.

"I can relate to those issues," says the 23-year-old who questioned his degree choice at one point as well. "It's pretty common to not know what you want to do in life when you're 18 or 19."

Building confidence, learning better time management and picking up tips on how to study better are all part of the peer sessions typically held for courses with a large number of Ds and Fs.

But while Nikitin advises most students to stick with their courses at least until after their first exams, not all problems can be solved by peers like himself. In some cases, professional counsellors are better to talk to.

Shari Woods-Baum is one of them. The counsellor at Ryerson University in Toronto says students can feel overwhelmed by university for a number of reasons, making it important to pinpoint what irks them the most.

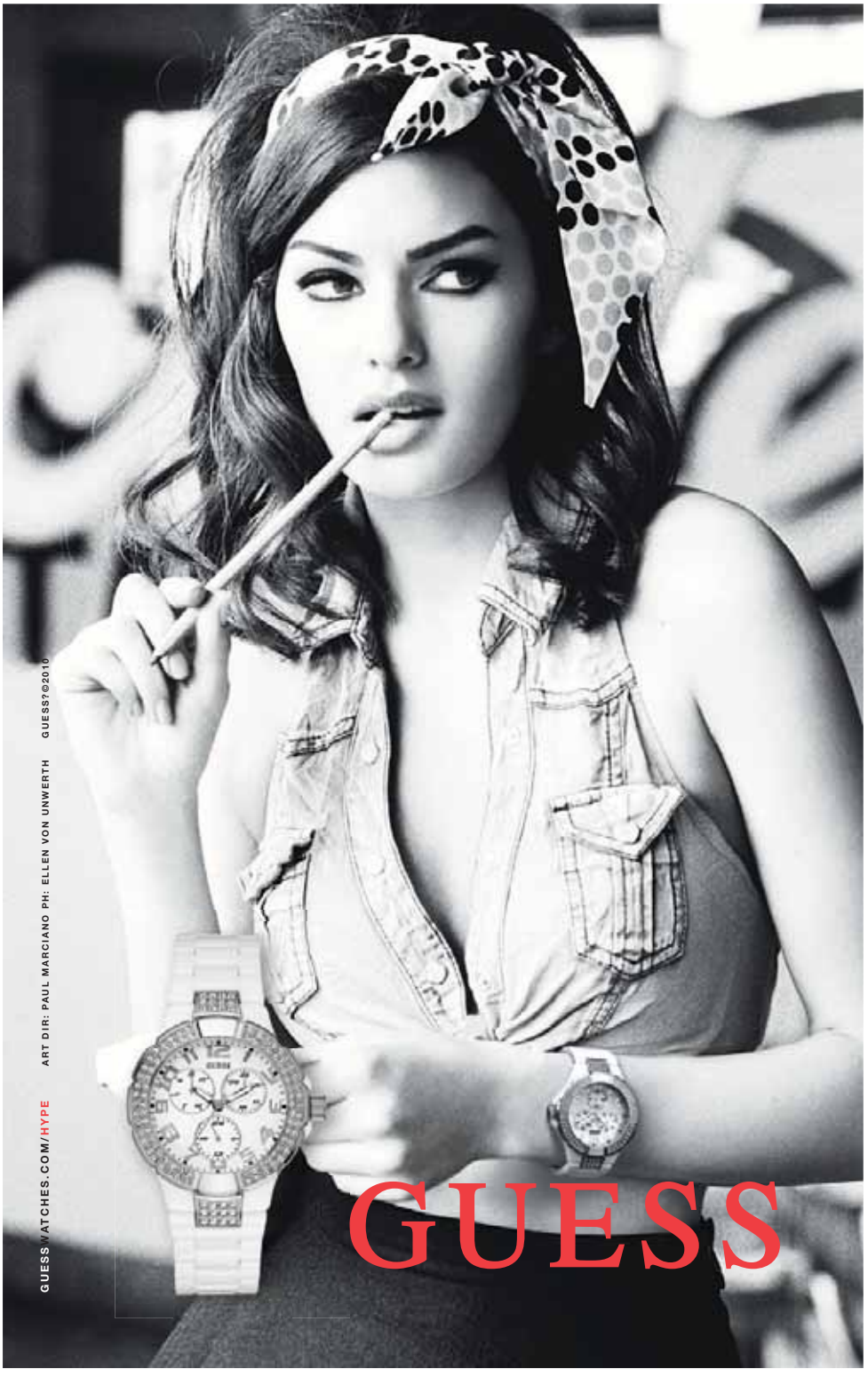
"It's really a holistic process," says Woods-Baum of the evaluation students need to go through when examining their decision to change majors or even to leave university.

"We definitely want to look at the entire breadth of their life."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

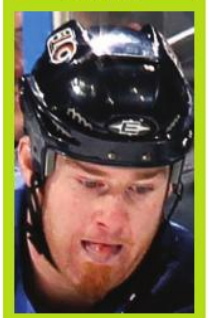


▶ Stressing about a possible switch? Don't pull your hair out. Experts emphasize that questioning academic choices is a natural reaction for anyone attending university.



4 sports

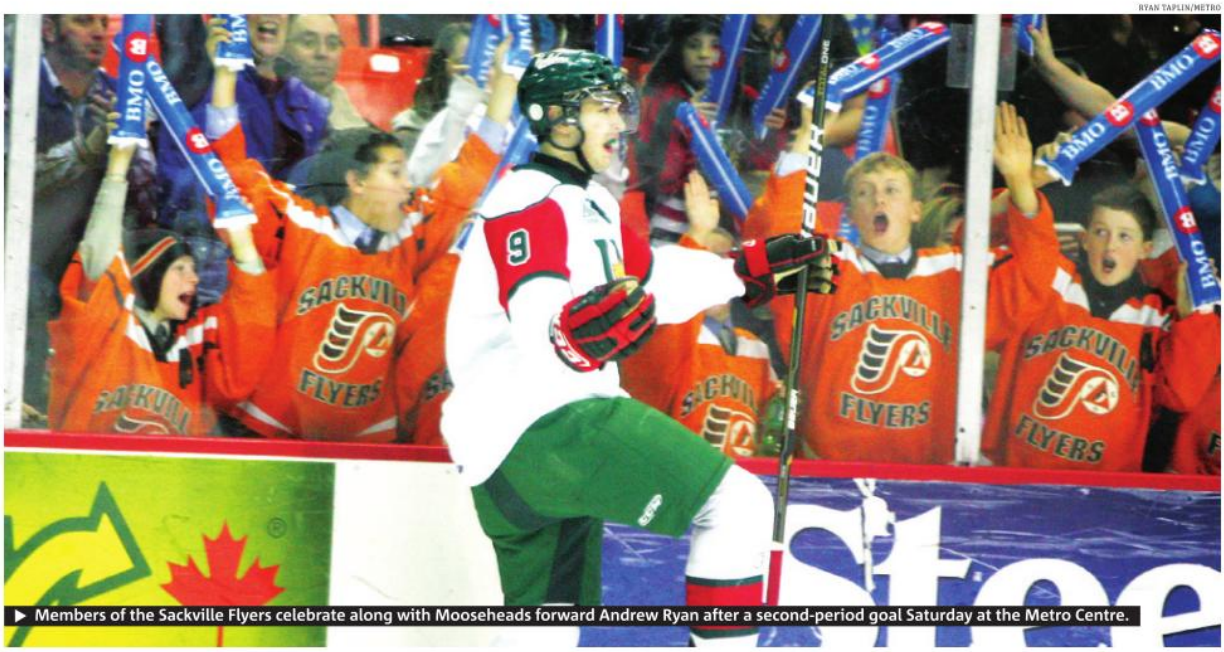
Quoted



"He puts in the work and it's great to see him rewarded like that. It's fun. We are having a good time about it and I'm sure we haven't heard the end of him talking about it."

ATLANTA THRASHERS FORWARD CHRIS THORBURN, ON TEAMMATE ERIC BOULTON, WHO SCORED A HAT TRICK IN SATURDAY'S 7-1 WIN OVER THE NEW JERSEY DEVILS. BOULTON, A 34-YEAR-OLD VETERAN FORWARD, IS FROM MIDDLE SACKVILLE.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



▶ Members of the Sackville Flyers celebrate along with Mooseheads forward Andrew Ryan after a second-period goal Saturday at the Metro Centre.

Herd optimistic going into break

- Mooseheads pull off first three-game winning streak of calendar year
- Thirteen wins at holiday break equals full-season total from 2009-10



MATTHEW WUEST
@METRONEWS.CA

As the crowd filtered out of the Metro Centre on Saturday night, the song Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town blared over the speakers. But as far as the Halifax Mooseheads were concerned, the big man had already delivered.

The Mooseheads had just edged the Bathurst Titan 5-4 and are suddenly smack in the middle of their first three-game winning streak of 2010 — and just their second since 2007-08 — as they take a nine-day break for the holidays.

All of this comes after a season-worst nine-game stretch that saw them lose eight times.

"Hard work brought us out of that slump," said right-winger Darcy Ashley. "We've had different players stepping up every night and it's been the key to our success."

It didn't seem like a probable turn of events last week. The Mooseheads had scored just 16 goals during their slump and just lost leading scorer Martin Frk to a world junior tryout.

But they maintained all along they had been playing well at the end of the losing streak and stuck with it.

"When you're on a winning streak, you play rotten at the end of it and win a few before it ends," said head coach Bobby Smith. "When you're on a losing streak, you play a couple of great games at the end and don't get rewarded. But now we've been rewarded three games in a row."

The Mooseheads are 13-23-0-1, 15th in the QMJHL. They have already matched their full-season win total from 2009-10 and are off for nine days before their next game on Dec. 28.

"We're going to put together quite a few more wins after Christmas," Ashley predicted. "I think we can be a .500 team, hopefully have a few more fans at the rink, and go into the playoffs on a hot streak."



Eagles' late rally stuns Giants

Philly in NFC East driver's seat after scoring 28 in final minutes

Just call it the great escape.

Michael Vick engineered it. DeSean Jackson capped it. And the Philadelphia Eagles have control of the NFC East firmly in their hands because of it.

Jackson scored on a 65-yard punt return on the final play of the game and the Eagles scored 28 points in the final 7:28 to stun the New York Giants 38-31 and take over first place in the NFC East.

Emphasizing his candidacy for the MVP award, Vick threw for two touchdowns and ran for another in the incredible late rally that all but clinched the division for the Eagles (10-4.)

Philadelphia has swept the season series with New York (9-5) and only needs to win one of its final two games or have New York lose one of its two.

Jackson's winning return came as the game seemed headed for overtime. Matt Dodge lined up to punt with 14 seconds to play and the rookie got off a line drive kick that Jackson bobbled at his 35.

Once he regained control, Jackson broke threw the initial line of coverage and sped down the right sideline. It was apparent he was about to score, but instead of simply going into the end zone, he danced along the goal line before going in with zeros showing on the clock.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VKATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



▶ Eagle DeSean Jackson celebrates a touchdown on a punt return yesterday.

In the playoffs



The Atlanta Falcons and Pittsburgh Steelers have clinched playoff berths, and neither team even needed to win.

- Atlanta gets in because the Philadelphia Eagles rallied to beat the New York Giants. At worst, the Falcons will be a wild card, but they have a two-game lead in the division over New Orleans, which lost at Baltimore 30-24.
- Despite a 22-17 loss to the New York Jets, the Steelers (10-4) were told by the NFL nearly an hour after the game ended that they secured a playoff spot via a series of complicated strength-of-schedule tiebreakers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'By far our best game'

The Halifax Rainmen wrapped up the Premier Basketball League pre-season on a high.

The Rainmen finished with a 3-1 record after beating the host Quebec Kebs a 111-105 yesterday, two days after topping them 114-104 on Friday before a crowd of 1,973 at the Metro Centre.

"This was by far our best game, there's no question about it," said Rainmen head coach Les Berry. "Defensively we played really well, offensively we were moving the ball and hitting shots, and we played a good team basketball game."

The game was tied at 95 in the fourth quarter before the Rainmen put it away with their "best eight minutes of the pre-season," according to Berry.

Eric Crookshank, Marshall Brown and Desmond Ferguson stayed in Halifax and didn't make the trip.

The Rainmen, who released centre Cyril Awere on the weekend, have nine players signed and four who are still trying out.

The Rainmen open the season at home against the Vermont Frost Heaves on Sunday, Jan. 2, at 3 p.m.

MATTHEW WUEST

Sports in brief

Marauders get OT win

MJHL. Ben Clarke scored the overtime winner with five seconds remaining as the Metro Marauders edged the Yarmouth Mariners 6-5 yesterday.

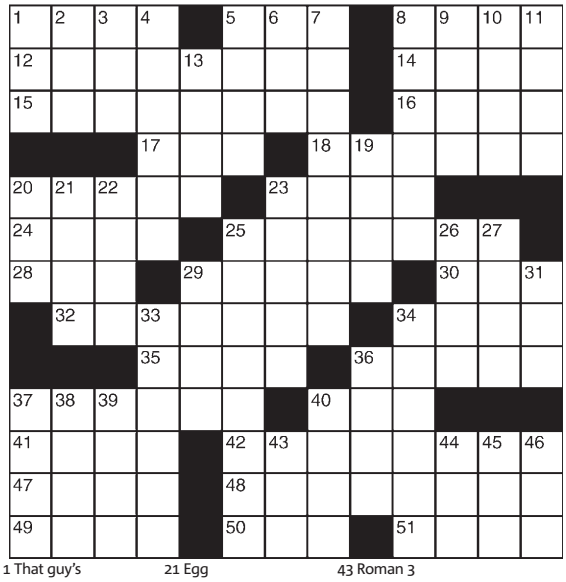
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Here's a preview of some of our fabulous participating venues:
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- Saege Bistro
- The Five Fishermen
- Hamachi Steakhouse Bar & Grill
- Trendz
- Niche
- Chives Canadian Bistro
- Durty Nelly's
- Carleton
- The Old Triangle
- Little Europe
- Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron
- Hart & Thistle
- Onyx
- Brussels
- Hamachi Kita

metro CBS OUTDOOR PRECISION ATLANTIC MEDIA GROUP FRASER HOYT C100 ntm TCL AVW-TELAV MetroTransit Good things come from Sysco

Crossword



Across
1 Hula Hoop holders?
5 Drunkard
8 Staff leader?
12 Badge of authority
14 Georgetown athlete
15 Creamless liquid
16 On the rocks
17 Baby's soft food
18 Card game that also means "swindle"
20 Transit fare, at times
23 Morse symbol
24 State with certainty
25 Ad slogan since 1993
28 Young dog
29 One of the S's in SST
30 "— the fields we go"
32 Unmanly man
34 Glenn of the Eagles
35 For fear that
36 Sports venue
37 Canada's capital
40 Literary collection
41 Armstrong's landing site
42 Dairy employee
47 Therefore
48 Situation with only two options
49 See 9-Down
50 — de Janeiro
51 Say it isn't so

Down
1 That guy's
2 Pen filler
3 Omega preceder
4 Smirk
5 Quick cut
6 Lubricate
7 Heed someone's advice
8 Arty
9 With 49-Across, monster's home?
10 Watchful one
11 Disappear gradually
13 Federal agt.
19 Gomer Pyle's org.
20 Spigot
21 Egg
22 French military headgear
23 "— pass Go, ..."
25 Cobwebby
26 Traditional tales
27 Acute
29 Twist
31 Flat-piled rug
33 Grassy plains
34 Made to look guilty
36 Egyptian cross
37 Portent
38 Ripped
39 Apparel
40 Singing voice
43 Roman 3
44 Exist
45 Charged bit
46 Thirsty

▶ Yesterday's answer

P	A	C		A	D	O	S		S	E	R	B		
A	N	A		N	I	N	A		C	I	A	O		
W	I	T	H	D	R	A	W		A	R	G	O		
			H	U	R	T			D	R	E	A	M	
S	T	O	R	E		P	L	E	A					
L	U	L	L		D	R	A	W	B	A	C	K		
O	B	I		T	O	A	D	Y		S	H	E		
B	A	C	K	B	O	N	E		S	T	A	G		
			H	A	R	K		F	A	U	N	S		
M	O	L	A	R			G	I	S	T				
A	M	O	K		B	O	N	E	H	E	A	D		
T	E	R	I		R	E	A	R		L	Y	E		
E	N	D	S		A	R	T	Y		Y	E	N		

Sudoku

	2		4		8		1	
6								2
		5	6		9	4		
	6		8	4	2		5	
	3						2	
	8		1	9	3		4	
		1	7		6	8		
3								5
	7		9		5		3	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

9	6	7	5	3	4	8	1	2
1	5	3	8	6	2	9	7	4
2	8	4	7	1	9	6	3	5
3	7	2	4	5	6	1	8	9
6	9	5	1	8	7	4	2	3
4	1	8	9	2	3	7	5	6
7	3	6	2	4	1	5	9	8
8	4	1	3	9	5	2	6	7
5	2	9	6	7	8	3	4	1

Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Happy Birthday Swica!!! I love you endlessly and am very glad we found each other. I hope we spend all of your birthdays together! Also, hope you liked your surprise:D ja tebe duje kohaju! **KAT**

Dear Daniel, we have officially lasted 4 years without killing eachother. That deserves many more years to enjoy together. Love you so much, sugarbunny. **CAROLE**

to my SpudMuffin
You are everything I never knew I wanted or needed. I am incredibly happy and want the whole world to know it. I love you with all my heart. **DA BEEACHIE**

Erica,
I love you more than anything on Earth. You're the ice cream on my cherry pie. **THOMSON MIDDLEBOTTOM**



For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 You will be on the go non-stop today. The moment you get one task out of the way, another will need to be dealt with. Important people will be impressed.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 Be careful what you agree to over the next two or three days because the approaching lunar eclipse will blur the line between fact and fantasy. This is not a good time to be reckless with money or reputation.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 Even if you are the most even-tempered Gemini, something or someone will wind you up a bit today. Whatever it is, you must find ways to defuse the situation.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You may be confused as to what's happening in the world but there is no point worrying. Nothing bad is going to happen, so promise yourself that you will stay calm at all times.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 It does not matter how hard you work today – others will find fault with everything you do. In which case, why do anything? They need you more than you need them.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Why do some people focus on negative things while ignoring all the good that goes on in the world? Whatever the reason, you will have to deal with one such individual today. Don't let him or her depress you.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you are not entirely happy with your current situation there is still time to change it, but you have got to be quick.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 You need to take extra care today, and tomorrow, as the lunar eclipse in Gemini warns that you could lose out financially if you don't keep track of your money.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 The approaching eclipse seems to be playing havoc with other people's emotions, so be ready for some over-the-top scenes. You, of course, will stay calm and have a good laugh at their expense. Life is endlessly amusing.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Forget about the things that went wrong over the previous 12 months. What you achieve over the next 12 months will more than make up for it.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 It may be tempting to deal with problems by pretending they don't exist, but you know that isn't the answer. Tomorrow's eclipse will bring a personal issue to a head. This time, you must, and will, deal with it.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Today's cosmic movements will make it difficult for you to make up your mind, but that could be a good thing. A lot is going to change over the next few days.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

PAT ROQUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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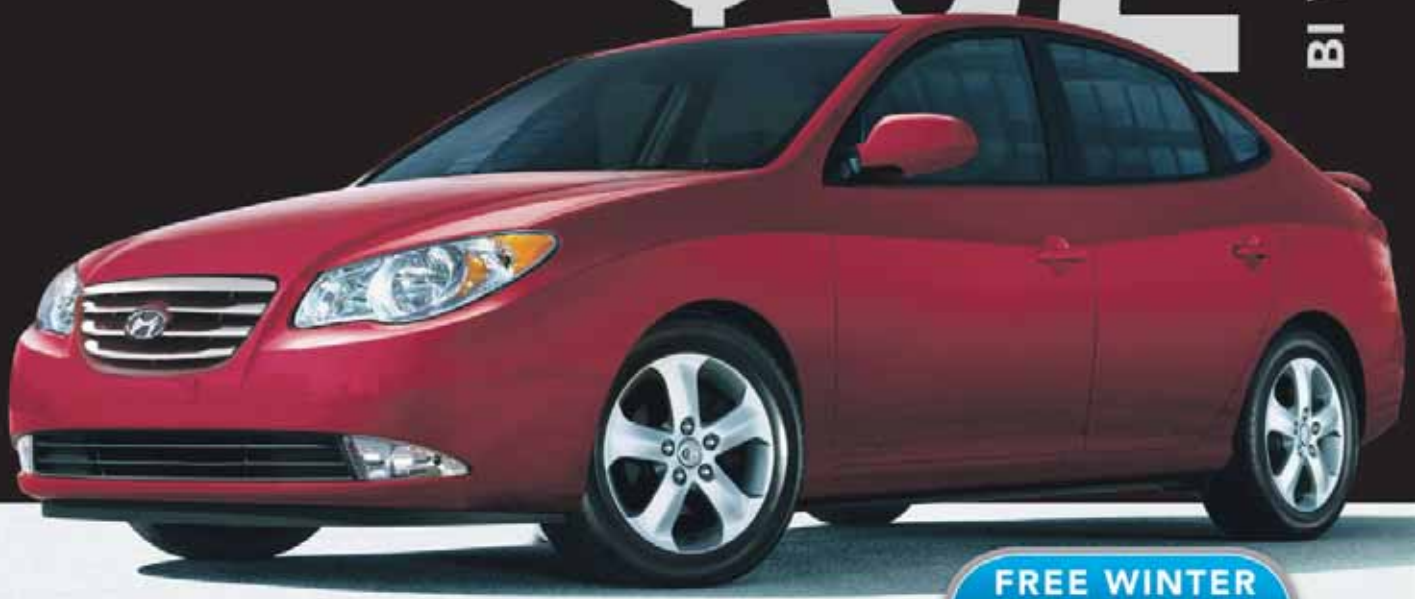
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